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COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION
Thirty-first session
13 May-7 June 1991
Agenda item 7

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ITS THIRTY-FIRST SESSION

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Boris GOUDIMA (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic)

III. PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993

Section 9. Legal activities

1. At its 21st meeting, on 24 May, the Committee considered section 9 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

Discussion

2. General support was expressed for the activities of the Office of Legal Affairs, in particular the legal services provided in connection with peace-keeping activities, the servicing of the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly and efforts to catch up with the backlog in publications. Particular interest was expressed in training, which, it was felt, should be undertaken not only to promote the adoption of legal texts but to develop national legal capabilities.

3. Some delegations queried the justifications for the proposed reclassifications and sought additional information in terms of workloads.

4. Some delegations were of the view that efforts to rationalize the work of the Sixth Committee should lead to reduced requirements for substantive services. It further questioned the continuing validity of the legislative mandate for certain activities. It was generally recognized, however, that the agenda of the Sixth Committee and the working groups of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) were determined by Member States.

5. Several delegations were concerned about the feasibility and potential cost of the proposal to upgrade the United Nations Treaty Information System but would support cost-effective measures to improve access by Member States to treaty information. It was noted that technological innovations were being planned in cooperation with other offices concerned, in particular the Department of Conference Services.

6. Some delegations questioned the usefulness of late issuance of publications, especially those of interest to only a small user community, and raised the question of the possibility of charging user fees.

7. Appreciation was expressed for the efforts made by the Office of Legal Affairs to ensure the balanced presentation in the work of the Office of the different legal systems of the world.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. The Committee recommended approval by the General Assembly of the programme narrative of section 9 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.